
FSIS DIRECTIVE

7160.2

4-14-97

"MEAT" PREPARED USING ADVANCED MECHANICAL MEAT/BONE SEPARATION MACHINERY AND MEAT RECOVERY SYSTEMS

I. PURPOSE

This directive provides instructions for an additional activity to determine whether product derived from the mechanical separation of skeletal muscle tissue from the bones of livestock is "meat". The instructions in this directive supplement procedures in FSIS Directive 7160.1.

FSIS is issuing this directive to clarify that inspection program personnel should take all bone-related components into account when evaluating product derived from the mechanical separation of skeletal muscle tissue from the bones of livestock. Product that contains spinal cord does not come within the definition of "meat" in §301.2(rr) (2) of the regulations.

II. RESERVED

III. RESERVED

IV. REFERENCES

§ 301.2 (rr) (the definition of meat)
FSIS Directive 8800.2, dated 8-2-91
FSIS Directive 7160.1, dated 9-13-96

V. BACKGROUND

"Meat" as defined in 9 CFR 301.2(rr) includes the part of livestock muscle that is skeletal or is found in the tongue, diaphragm, heart, or esophagus, with or without the accompanying and overlying fat, and the portions of bone, skin, sinew, nerve, and blood vessels that normally accompany the muscle tissue and are not separated from it in the process of dressing.

Subparagraph (2) of § 301.2(rr) includes as “meat” product derived from the mechanical separation of skeletal muscle tissue from the bones of livestock using the advances in mechanical meat/bone separation machinery and meat recovery systems that do not crush, grind, or pulverize bones if the bones that emerge from the system are comparable to those resulting from hand-deboning (i.e., essentially intact and in natural physical conformation such that they are recognizable such as loin bones and rib bones when they emerge from the machinery) and the product has a calcium content of not more than 0.15 percent or 150 mg/100 gm of product (as a measure of bone solids content) within a tolerance of 0.03 percent or 30 mg. FSIS’s purpose in adding subparagraph (2) to § 301.2(rr) was to supplement the definition of “meat” so that meat includes product derived by recovery systems that remove muscle from bones by a mechanical means that results in product that has the functional and chemical characteristics of meat. In other words, the product is comparable to product derived by hand deboning. In particular, the product’s content of hard bone and related components is to be comparable to that of product derived by hand deboning.

Since FSIS issued Directive 7160.1, there have been questions about when product should not be considered to be “meat”. The definition in § 301.2(rr) (2) is not intended to apply when the use of mechanical meat/bone separation machinery results in product that contains spinal cord.

This directive (like FSIS Directive 7160.1) does not apply to mechanically separated product (finely comminuted product resulting from the mechanical separation and removal of most of the bone from attached skeletal muscle). Mechanically separated product is expected to include bone-related components in greater amounts than meat. (See §§ 319.5 and 319.6 of the regulations for the definition and standard for “Mechanically Separated (Species)” and limitations on its use as a meat food product ingredient. Product that does not comply with the calcium limit may be Mechanically Separated (Species) (see § 318.24(b)(1) of the regulations).

VI. INSPECTION PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

When assigned by PBIS to perform Inspection System Guide task 06D06b2, conduct the following activity in addition to the activity described in Section D of FSIS Directive 7160.1.

- o Determine whether the establishment is completely removing spinal cord from neck and/or back bones (if any) before bones enter the system.

If you believe that establishment personnel are not doing so, take a ¼ -pound sample of the finished product and send it to FSIS’s Eastern Laboratory at the following address, using overnight Federal Express:

USDA, FSIS
Eastern Laboratory
Pathology Section
950 College Station Road
Athens, GA 30605

Inspection program personnel will be notified (through channels) of the findings and what (if any) follow-up regulatory action (s) to take.

/s/ Thomas J. Billy

Administrator